

Performing the Arts of **INDONESIA**

Malay Identity and Politics in
the Music, Dance and Theatre
of the Riau Islands



Edited by MARGARET KARTOMI

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OF INDONESIA

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PERFORMING THE ARTS OF INDONESIA

*Malay Identity and Politics in
the Music, Dance and Theatre of
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edited by
Margaret Kartomi

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ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

Selected supporting images and audio-visual material cited in this book are available for viewing in the Monash University Research Repository: <https://doi.org/10.4225/03/597fdd912867e>. Weblinks to view individual examples are provided in the relevant footnotes.

For a selection of colour field photos taken in the Riau Islands between 1981 and 2015, see: <https://arts.monash.edu/music-archive/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/05/Kepri-2.pdf>.

For the Music Archive of Monash University, including its Riau islands component, see: <https://arts.monash.edu/music-archive/>.

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THIS PROJECT WAS CONCEIVED and completed on unceded lands belonging to the Kulin nation in Australia. We pay our respects to elders past, present and future, and acknowledge that this land always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Realising the pioneering nature and large scope of the research task, the chief investigator invited some other Kepri-born and international scholars to join the team in presenting research papers at the international conferences on the performing arts of the Riau Islands that she organised in Tanjungpinang in 2012 and Melbourne in 2015. They included the historian Leonard Andaya; ethnomusicologists Jenny McCallum, Brigitta Scarfe and Muhamed Hasbi; choreographers Raja Alfirafindra and Rina Martiara; theatre researcher Abang Syafaruddin; oral traditions scholar Pudentia MPSS; social and cultural anthropologists Vivienne Wee, and Nicholas Long. The chapters in this book are re-workings of the conference papers by this extended team of researchers.

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rare research materials and for sharing with us his deep knowledge of Kepri culture and history. Lingga-born oral historian Lazuardy and Doctorandus Rosana S.IP, Deputy Head of Daik Museum Linggam Cahaya, kindly helped organise performances in the Lingga regency, with the valuable support of the then Bupati of Lingga, Doctorandus H. Daria. Thanks also to the all-round musician, *sanggar* director and head of the Department of Education and Culture in Ranai/Natuna Bp Hadisun, for frank discussions of local ideas and knowledge, and to the composer and musician Raja Ahmad Helmy in Tanjungpinang, who kindly gave the team recordings of some of his compositions based on traditional styles. He also performed *mak yong* ensemble music with a troupe brought by Ibu Pudentia MPSS to Monash University in 2014. Head of the Dewan Kesenian (Arts Council) in Kepri, Bp Husnizar Hood, and choreographer Ibu Peppy Chandra were also helpful, as were the choreographers and *mak yong* revitalisers Ibu Elvy Latriana and Bp Said Parman in Daik and Tanjungpinang, the author and poet Abdulkadir Ibrahim, and other artists and interlocutors named in the chapters below.

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Margaret Kartomi, editor
Monash University, April 2019

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Jenny McCallum has a PhD in Ethnomusicology from King's College London and holds a Masters in Ethnomusicology from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Recently she has lectured in Ethnomusicology at the University of Melbourne. She presented papers at the two International Conferences on the Riau Islands in 2013 in Tanjungpinang and in 2015 in Melbourne. She is currently part of the research project *Musical Transitions to European Colonialism in the Eastern Indian Ocean* led by Katherine Butler Schofield. Her research focuses on music and sound in the 19th century sultanate of Riau–Lingga–Johor–Pahang (including Singapore), involving both public soundscapes and the representation of music and sound in Malay literary texts. Her research interests in contemporary Indonesian music include underground genres and Javanese gamelan.

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laborated with her ISI Dance colleague Raja Alfirafindra in their research into *zapin* dancing on Penyengat Island for this book.

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Brigitta Scarfe obtained her Masters in Ethnomusicology in 2018 at the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music, Monash University. In 2015, she carried out fieldwork in Tanjungpinang and presented papers on her research at the Second International Symposium on the Malay Arts of the Riau Islands in Melbourne in 2014 as well as at the conference of the International Council for Traditional Music's Organology Study Group in Luang Prabang, Laos, in 2016.

Syafaruddin is Head of the Culture Section of the Office for Tourism and Culture of Riau Islands Province in Tanjungpinang where he has led the revitalisation of several traditional performance genres, including *boria* and *gobang*. Born in a remote village on Bunguran Island in Natuna, he was exposed to *gobang* performances as a child, and was able to learn to perform and direct performances of *gobang* as well as to make its masks and other properties. He is the founding President of the Gobang Association in Tanjungpinang which presents performances of *gobang* mask theatre in Tanjungpinang and elsewhere.

Karen Kartomi Thomas M.A and PhD (U.C. Berkeley) is a specialist in traditional and contemporary Indonesian theatre and performance. She is currently Research Fellow in theatre studies in the ARC project for this book within the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music at Monash University. She recently returned from fieldtrips to Tanjungpinang and Natuna in the Riau Islands where her research focuses on women in

CONTRIBUTORS

Indonesian-Malay traditional theatre, including *mendu*, and another trip to the province of Lampung where she is researching male mask theatre and the performing arts generally. At Monash University she has been teaching courses and supervising higher degree research students in Asian theatre and performance. After gaining a PhD in Modern Indonesian Theatre from the University of California Berkeley in 1993, she became Lecturer-in-Charge of Indonesian language from 1992 to 1995 at the University of Melbourne.

Vivienne Wee is an anthropologist whose PhD thesis at the Australian National University dealt with the history and traditions of the court of the former viceroy on Penyengat Island, offshore from Tanjungpinang (a revised version is soon to be published). She presented a paper on her Penyengat research at the International Conference on Malay Civilisation in Tanjungpinang in 2014. She is a freelance anthropologist who lives in Singapore and is continuing her fieldwork on the traditions at Penyengat, including the genealogies of musicians.

Orthography

MOST NON-ENGLISH TERMS in this book are given in Malay (Malay), Latinised Arabic (Ar.), Javanese (Jav.) or Indonesian language (I.). Unless otherwise noted, all non-English words are in Indonesian. The spelling of Indonesian words conforms to the official system of 1972 and Javanese spellings are as in Javanese newspapers from 1974. Words and names in use before the new spellings were introduced are given in the old spelling, for example, *dj* and *tj* (old spelling) are rendered *j* and *c* respectively (new spelling). Place names are given in their official Indonesian spellings, with terms and genres usually appearing in their local spellings.

The dialectology of the Riau Islands is still largely unknown; however, the sources of some local vernacular pronunciations and spellings are noted directly in this book (e.g. Jemaja Malay [JMalay], Lingga Malay [LinMalay] Natuna Malay [NaMalay], and Penyengat Malay [PenMalay]. In Natuna the differences between the Ranai and Sedenau Malay dialects are slight, e.g. in Ranai the vowel 'a' is pronounced *e* as in *adè*, *dapèt* and *Selasè* as it is in many other areas of the Malay world, whereas in Sedenau the 'a' is pronounced as in standard Indonesian, as in *ada*, *dapat*, and *Selasa* (see Thomas, Chapter 11).

Abbreviations

AKAMR	Akademi Kesenian Melayu Riau (Academy of Riau Malay Arts)
ANU	Australian National University
Ar.	Arabic
BKI	<i>Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</i> (Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia)
EIC	(British) East India Company
DB&P	Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka
DBMT	Direktorat Bina Masyarakat Terasing (Directorate of Foreign Communities)
I.	Indonesian
IJAPS	<i>International Journal of Asian and Pacific Studies</i>
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
Jav.	Javanese
JMalay	Jemaja-Malay
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malayan (later Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSEAS	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</i>
KITLV	Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (Royal Institute for the Study of Social Sciences)
LinMalay	Lingga Malay
MBRAS	Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
MS	Manuscript
NaMalay	Natuna Malay
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
NUS	National University of Singapore

OSL	Orang Suku Laut (People of the Sea)
OUP	Oxford University Press
p.c.	personal communication
PenMalay	Penyengat Malay
PMB-LIPI	Research Centre for Society and Culture – Indonesian Institute of Sciences
RI	Republic of Indonesia
RIMA	<i>Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs</i>
SMA	Sekolah Menengah Atas (Senior High School)
SMP	Sekolah Menengah Pertama (Junior High School)
STISIPOL	Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Raja Haji (Raja Haji College of Social and Political Sciences)
TAG	<i>Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap</i> (Journal of the Royal Dutch Geography Society)
TBG	<i>Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</i> (Journal of Indies Language, Land and Ethnology)
TNI	<i>Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië</i> (Journal of Netherlands Indies)
UMRAH	Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji (Raja Ali Haji Maritime University)
UNSW	University of New South Wales
VBG	<i>Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap</i> (Proceedings of the Batavia Society)
VOC	Vereinigde Oostindische Compagnie (United East Indies Company)
YDB	Yang Dipertuan Besar (title of the Sultan of Riau-Lingga)
YDM	Yang Dipertuan Muda (title of the Viceroy of Riau-Lingga)
YTM	<i>Yearbook for Traditional Music</i>

Zapin dancing and *gambus* music in the Viceroy's court at Penyengat

Raja Alfirafindra and Rina Martiara,
translated by Margaret Kartomi

THIS CHAPTER DISCUSSES THE RECENT HISTORY and style of the male *zapin/zafin Melayu* ('Malay *zapin* or *zafin*') dance and the *gambus* ensemble music which accompanies it, as practised on the former royal island of Penyengat, which lies a few kilometres off the shores of the provincial capital, Tanjungpinang.¹ It compares the Penyengat style with that of the former palaces of Sambas in West Kalimantan and Siak in east-coastal Sumatra. The mixed Malay–Middle Eastern style of *zapin Melayu* exemplifies the tendency of the people of the Riau Islands to combine facets of Malay and Middle–Eastern cultures, which have been in long-term contact. The chapter details the three-sectional structure of the dance and shows that the dance formations of the *zapin* are based on traditional Malay concepts of space, including the cardinal directional, parallel linear, circular, concentric circular, square, and concentric square concepts (Figure 9.1). Finally, it discusses the significance of the *zapin* as a symbol of identity in the Riau Archipelago today, where it is compulsory for junior and senior high school students to learn its basic dance motifs and troupes are encouraged to perform at frequent annual festivals and regional competitions.

In modern Indonesia, Arab–Indonesian communities whose members trace their lineage mainly to the Hadramaut in present-day Yemen regard *zapin* as a key feature of their weddings and other celebrations.

1. All foreign terms are in Malay unless otherwise stated, though some terms are derived from Arabic.

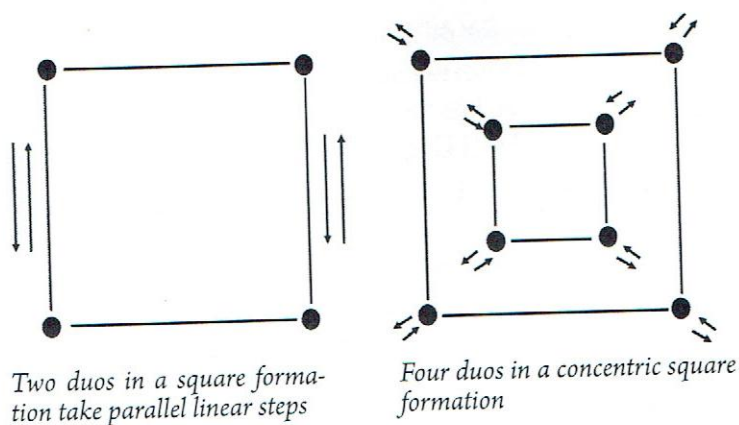


Figure 9.1: Some uses of performance space by duo *zapin* Kepri dancers

The men take turns to dance into the night with friends and family, accompanied by a *gambus* lute and *marwas* drums, which are believed to be of Arab origin (Berg 2011: 207). For them, *zapin* is a visual and sonic symbol of the original land of Islam and must be danced only by males. Non-Arab-Malay communities in various parts of Indonesia, however, have developed their own local versions of the dance. In the Riau Islands today, *zapin* is generally regarded as a mixed-gender form of Malay entertainment with accompanying songs set to Malay *pantun* (quatrains) on love and other secular themes, with Muslim nuances (*nuansa Islam*). The *zapin Melayu* form that developed at Penyengat is the basis of the standard Riau Islands style, although it is danced slightly differently in Tambelan, Natuna, Anambas and some other parts of the province.

Zapin Melayu may be defined as a Malay dance and musical genre of Indonesian Muslim Arabs that has been adopted and adapted as an art form for Indonesian Muslims in general (Berg 2011: 207). Because of its perceived Arabic origin, it has acquired something of the prestige of Islam itself. The dance is accompanied by a vocalist and soft-sounding, low-pitched *gambus Melayu* (lute) music, which alternates with loud rhythmic episodes (*kopak*) beaten out on a set of four or five small double-headed hand-drums called *marwas* (Arab plural form: *marawis*), plus optional *biola* (violin), accordion, frame drums and drum-kit (see also Hilarian 2004; Berg 2011: 207). However, traditionalist musicians often reject the extra instruments as they can drown out the subtle

sound of the *gambus* lute. *Zapin* dancing is closely integrated with the variable rhythm and tempo of the music, which is unlike any other in the Malay world (*alam Melayu*).

The word *zapin*, or *zafin* as it is also called in the Riau Islands and some other areas, is probably of Arabic origin.² The late Penyengat-born scholar Raja Hamzah Yunus wrote that *zafin* derives from the Arabic *al-zafn*, meaning 'foot movements', referring to the elaborate set of foot movements used in the dance (Yunus 2000: 95). Further, anyone who wants to become a *zapin* dancer must master all of its rhythmic movements (*ragam gerak*). If dancing with a partner, the lead dancer should decide which movements he will perform and should tell his partner to perform the same movements in perfect coordination (*disepakati*) with him (*ibid.* 2000: 95).

Communities of Arab traders and religious scholars, including the Tuan Said (from *tuan sayyid*, which can be glossed as 'lord descendants of the Prophet Muhammad'), live in various parts of Indonesia, including in and around the former palaces at Penyengat and Daik-Lingga in the Riau Islands and in palaces in Sumatra such as those at Serdang, Siak, Jambi and Palembang. The sultans gave the Tuan Said special privileges because they were of the same ethnicity as the Prophet. Most Tuan Said have married Malay women, and enjoy performing *zapin Arab* with Muslim-religious song texts and *gambus* and *marwas* accompaniment at their weddings and other celebrations. This chapter, however, deals only with the secular form of *zapin Melayu* dance and music performed outside these Arab communities, as it is on Penyengat, Bintan and Lingga islands.

As in mainland Riau, male *zapin* dancers in the Riau Islands wear a Malay trouser suit of cotton or satin (*baju Melayu* or *teluk belanga*) with a high stiff collar (*cekak musang*), a wrap-around *sarong* (alias *kain sampling*) made of local woven cloth or *songket*³ and a plain black cap (*kopiah*). In the 1930s women were allowed to dance *zapin* and from

2. According to Winstedt's dictionary (1960–65), the word *zapin*, of Arabic origin, is used throughout the Malay world. Charles Capwell found correspondences between relevant terms in Malay and Arabic, e.g. *zapin* and *zafana* (Malay, Arab), *marwas* and *marwas*, and *gambus* and *qanbous* (Malay, Arab) which seem broadly to support the theory that *zapin* is of Arab origin (Capwell 1995: 77).
3. *Songket* is a luxury silk or cotton cloth woven with a supplementary gold or silver metal weft (Kartomi 2012: 430).

the 1980s onwards they have again been allowed to do this, either in a row opposite a row of men or in separate female groups. They normally wear a traditional long blouse (*baju kurung*) or a short blouse (*baju kebaya*) over a wraparound skirt (*kain songket*), with antique jewelry and flowers and gold ornaments in their hair buns, or more recently, *jilbabs* (head scarves). All dance barefoot. In the Islands *zapin* can be danced on almost any occasion, including weddings, circumcisions, complete Al-Qur'an reading celebrations, religious and national holidays, festivals, competitions and formal government or corporate events.

The music for *zapin Melayu* dancing

The lead musician in *zapin Melayu* performances either plays a home-made narrow-bodied *gambus Melayu* (Malay *gambus* lute – see Figure 1.12 on page 16) or a modern wide-bellied *gambus Arab* (Arab *gambus*), which looks like an Arabic 'ud. The arch-backed Malay *gambus* is the older of the two types, made by hand from a single piece of wood, with a variable number of strings (often four or six double strings and a single thicker string), while the pear-shaped *gambus Arab* has a slightly louder sound, is full-bellied, has a tapered neck, a decorated ring of sound holes on its belly, and a variable number of strings. According to

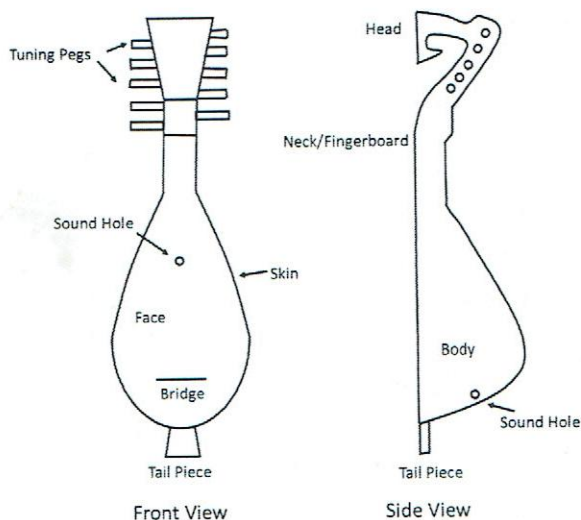


Figure 9.2: A *gambus Melayu* minus the variable number of strings, featuring a resonating cavity closed by a skin. Drawing by Anthea Skinner based on Hilarian 2004: 2. The *gambus* measures c. 60 x 60 x 10 cm.

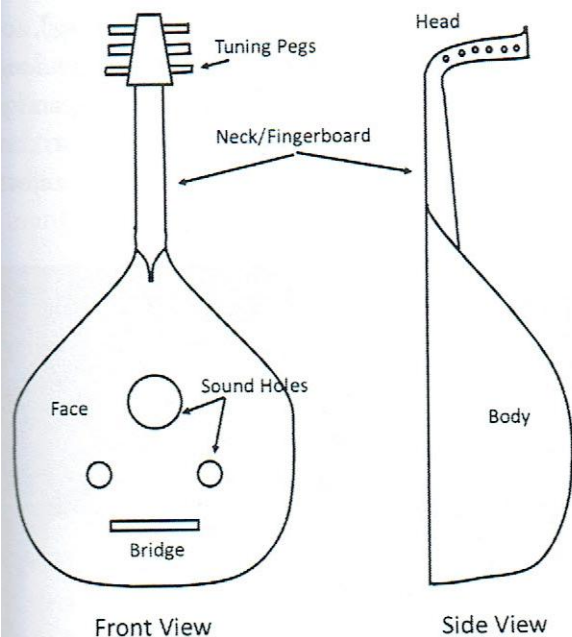


Figure 9.3: A *gambus Arab* minus the variable number of strings. Drawing by Anthea Skinner based on Hilarian 2004: 2. The *gambus* measures c. 93 x 10 x 20 cm.

a legend (*cerita rakyat*) in the Tambelan Islands in the southeastern corner of the Riau Archipelago, the *gambus Melayu* is shaped like the lower part of a human leg (*betis*), with the foot represented by the peg-box. Both types of *gambus* are made of the wood of a jackfruit (*nangka*)⁴ tree and their strings are plucked with a quill, plectrum or the fingernails. Because *gambus Arab* can nowadays be bought ready made in shops in Tanjungpinang or Singapore, more players since the 1990s have played the *gambus Arab* than the *gambus Melayu*, which is increasingly rare.

The sets of small, double-headed *marwas* hand-drums that perform the loud, high-pitched *kopak* (alias *santing*, *dugoh*) transition sections between the sung verses and the final *tahto* codas in a *zapin* performance are made of milky mangrove tree (*mentang* or *mentaru*) wood, and their two heads are covered with stretched black monkey or goat skin. At least three and usually four or five *marawis* are beaten together very loudly on both ends in interlocking fashion (*tingkah marwas*).

4. Jackfruit-tree timber is regarded as being suitable for instrument-making because it is termite-free and resembles teak wood (Hilarian 2004).

The ensembles may be enlarged with a violin (*biola*), flute (*suling*), accordion (*akordion*), *harmonium*, double-headed Malay drums (*gendang Melayu*), a pair of hourglass drums (*dumbuk/gedombak*), a gong and a Western drumkit (see Figure 9.4). However, as the extra instruments can drown out the sound of the *gambus*, traditional musicians often reject them.



Figure 9.4: A *gambus* ensemble for a *zapin* performance on Penyengat in 1985

The rhythmic beats (*rentak*) and changeable tempi (*irama*) of the music are related to the rhythmic movements (*ragam gerak*) of the dancers' feet (*gerak langkah*, literally 'step movements') and their swaying hand movements (*ayunan tangan*). The melodically undulating *senandung* style melodies⁵ are usually set to poetry in *pantun* or *syair* quatrains on themes of love or nature, and are sung slowly and emotionally. The verses, of which there are many thousands, are not normally tied to particular melodies. Thus, a singer is free to invent or adapt a verse to a melody, or use one of the numerous published verses in Arabic, Malay, or a combination of the two (Parman 2000: 196).

5. *Senandung*-style melodies are said to undulate melodically 'like hills and valleys', are usually set to quatrain poetry on love, nature or other secular themes, and are sung slowly, emotionally and in a slightly *rubato* fashion (p.c. Syafaruddin, Tanjungpinang, 8 January 2013).

The low-pitched 'ud-like *gambus* with its double-string strumming and the melodic intertwining of the *gambus*, *biola* and the vocal line (if present), interspersed with brilliantly loud drumming between repeats of the melody and the final coda, lend the music a Middle Eastern feel, while the mainly secular Malay lyrics and Malay-style vocal and instrumental sounds give it, at the same time, a Malay character.



Example 9.1: *Zapin Melayu* melody for a voice or *biola*, titled *Lagu Sahabat Laila* (Song of Friend Laila), based on S. Berrein's music example in Nor 2000: 213.

The *zapin Melayu* melody for a voice or *biola* in Music Example 9.1, titled *Lagu Sahabat Laila* ('Song of Friend Laila'), is regarded as having Arab nuances (*nuansa Arab*). It begins with a typical *zapin Kepri* memory code on solfa tones 5 6 7 $\dot{1}$, which is followed by a variation of its retrograde, $\dot{1}$ 7 6 5 and a series of descending melodic sequences.

Thoughts on the history of *zapin* in Indonesia and Kepri

According to the late Penyengat elder Wan Ghalib,⁶ a dance resembling *zapin Melayu* and the *gambus* ensemble music which accompanies it may have been brought to the harbour kingdom of Riau in the Riau Islands centuries ago by Arab traders who not only plied their commercial wares but also spread the knowledge of Islam among members of the then Hindu and Animist population (Ghalib 1981: 2). Such contact, Wan Ghalib argues, may have begun long before the 1390s when the first king to convert to Islam in Southeast Asia was installed at Pasai to the sound of a royal *nobat* ensemble brought there by an Arab trader (Chapter 4). The late *zapin* dancer and teacher Raja Hamzah Yunus of Penyengat said he thought that such a dance might have originated in the Arabian Peninsula a few centuries ago. Ethnochoreologist Mohd Anis Md Nor wrote that 'The Johore Malays attribute the development

6. Wan Ghalib is chairman of the Institute for Riau Traditional Customs (Lembaga Adat Riau).

of *Zapin Arab* and *Zapin Melayu* to a dance tradition of the Hadhramis (the Arabs of Hadhramaut) who first brought the Hadhrami traditions to the Malay areas';⁷ however, Nor's informants were unable to name any Arab dance genre that preceded the *zapin Melayu* tradition (Nor 1993: 5, 24). Moreover, there are no references to *zapin* or its alternative names (*zafin*, *jepin*, *japin*) in the extensive belletristic literature written about the Malay world between the 14th and 19th centuries (listed in the Malay Concordance Project).⁸ Thus, where and when *zapin Melayu* originated remains speculative. It may have multiple origins.

That *zapin* was performed in Batavia in the nineteenth century has been documented by I.W.C. van den Berg, who referred to a dance genre called *zafin* in a Batavian–Arab community (Berg 1886: 91–92). The late Tengku Luckman Sinar found press cuttings that showed that *zapin* was performed in and around the former court of Serdang between the 1880s and the 1930s, including at the installation of the Sultan Sulaiman Shariful Alamsyah of Serdang in 1881, and it was also performed on auspicious days of the Muslim calendar (Nor 1993: 33, n. 23). Until the 1930s *zapin* groups from Deli–Medan, Langkat, Binjai and Labuhan converged on the Serdang palace annually to participate in *zapin* competitions, and trophies were presented to the winners, with the Sultan watching from his throne in the *balai adat* (audience hall). These *zapin* ensembles, comprising a *gambus*, three or four *marawis*, a tambourine and *markas* (maracas), played *Lancang Kuning* ('Royal Yellow Barge') (see Effendi 1981) and other Malay songs (Nor 1993: 26–27) which are still performed in Serdang, Siak, and Riau–Lingga today.

In the mainland Sumatran province of Riau today, *zapin* is especially popular in and around the district of the former Siak Sri Indrapura palace, located along the lower reaches of the Siak river (Kurnia 2016), as well as in the area around the former Pelalawan palace on the Kampar river (Effendi 2000: 17–38). *Zapin* is also well-known in east-coastal North and South Sumatra, West Sumatra, and in the former palace areas in Bengkulu, Jambi (Ibnur 2000: 61–78) and South Sumatra/Palembang, where it is called *dana*. In Java it is known as *zafin* or *zapin*, in Nusa

7. For a detailed account of *zapin Arab* and *zapin Melayu* in Malaysia, especially in the states of Johor, Pahang and Selangor, see Mohd Anis Md Nor (1993). Also see Nor (2000) for accounts of *zapin* practice in many parts of Nusantara/Indonesia and Malaysia.

8. See Proudfoot 1991.

Tenggara as *dana-dani*, in parts of Sulawesi as *jippeg* and in Kalimantan and Maluku as *jepin*.

The Malay palace in Sambas, West Kalimantan, is regarded as a historic centre of Islamic arts such as *zapin*, *orkes gambus*, and *hadrah*, and is believed to be the source of *zapin* on Penyengat. However, it is not known how long *zapin* has been performed there. According to several elders born on Penyengat between the 1880s and 1910s (Yunus 2000: 96–101), there was a tradition of royal intermarriage and trading relations between the palaces at Sambas and Penyengat from the eighteenth century or possibly earlier, based on their common mixed Bugis–Malay ancestries. The five Bugis brothers from Makassar, led by Daeng Parani, who in 1722 helped the sultan of Riau–Lingga–Johor and Pahang dethrone the Minangkabau pretender to the Malay throne, Raja Kecil, enjoyed very close ties with the succession of the sultans of the Riau Islands, with Sultan Sulaiman offering his brother Daeng Marewah the viceroyship (Yang Dipertuan Muda) in perpetuity. Later, another brother became sultan of Mempawah in West Kalimantan (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 27).

History of the Tuan Said and of *zapin* on Penyengat

As recorded in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* ('The Precious Gift') (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 5), the strategically located islet of Penyengat was settled from 1804. By then, it could boast an eventful history going back to the late eighteenth century when a fort was established there to defend the nearby town of Riau, capital of the sultanate of Johor–Pahang–Riau–Lingga. Penyengat saw several sea battles in defence of Riau, including in 1744 and 1753. But the documented history of Penyengat really began when the hero Raja Haji (the fourth Yang Dipertuan Muda [YDM] of Penyengat) died fighting the Dutch in 1784, after which the Dutch were forced to withdraw to Melaka for a few years.

After Sultan Mahmud III of Lingga–Riau (1761–1811) presented the island of Penyengat to his Bugis wife Engku Putri Raja Hamidah on their marriage, he and his successors converted Penyengat into an impressive palace town, with a grand mosque built between the 1830s and 1850s. Successive sultans and viceroys at Daik–Lingga and Penyengat invited Tuan Said (those considered to be Arab descendants of the Prophet) religious scholars and traders to migrate to the Riau Islands and help deepen the religious faith of the people. They lived just outside

the palaces in Daik–Lingga and Tanjungpinang and along the east coast of Sumatra, and married into and practiced local Malay culture.

Zapin and *gambus* performance tended to develop in areas with a history of contact between the local Malays and residents of Arab descent, including those who lived in rural villages outside Daik and in certain suburbs of Tanjungpinang. They were associated with Malay–Bugis scholars on Penyengat such as Raja Ali Haji (1808–1873), who wrote the above-mentioned epic, *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Raja Haji Ali 2012). Together, these nineteenth century scholars made Penyengat a famous centre of Malay literature on religious and secular themes and Islamic religious knowledge.⁹

There is no evidence that the *zapin* dance was performed on Penyengat before 1919, though it was performed in some other Malay palaces. The solo lute, the *gambus*, which is essential to *zapin*, predates *zapin* dancing on Penyengat by at least a century. The poet, historian, and scholar Raja Ali Haji mentions the lute in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* but not in association with any particular dance, and only to condemn those who used it to serenade women. He wrote that he ‘abhorred those who indulged in pleasures which led to loose behaviour between men and women, and those who sang and crooned *pantun* with veiled invitations for adultery’, and he severely discouraged lute-playing along with gambling and cock-fighting (Matheson and Andaya 1982: 283–284). At the time, the royal family and religious leaders of Penyengat alike expressed support for the socially severe edicts of Wahhabi Islam, and banned the mixing of men and women in public. *Zapin* was not even performed at the royal wedding of the daughter of the last Sultan of the Riau Islands, Abdul Rahman Muazzam Syah of Riau–Lingga – Tengku Aisyah – to a son of Sultan Mahmud of Trengganu in 1909, at which a diverse array of Malay, Javanese, Thai and Chinese dances were performed (see Yunus’ interview with Raja Muhamad Nongman¹⁰ – Yunus 2000: 97). As was

9. Under Raja Ali, the Naksyabandiyyah brand of Islam became popular on Penyengat, and all the princes studied mysticism at that time (Matheson 1989: 160)
10. Penyengat residents with Raja in their name are of aristocratic Malay–Bugis descent. If they are men they customarily add *bin* (‘son of’) before their father’s name, after their own name, as in Raja Ahmad bin Raja Daud. If they are women they use *binti*, which means ‘daughter of’, as in Raja Nafisah binti Raja Mahmud. Former aristocrats in Daik–Lingga often have Tengku (‘prince’) in their name. Men with Said or Sayyid in their name are of Tuan Said descent.

usual at royal weddings, which took place in this case at both Penyengat and Trengganu in peninsular Malaya, the celebrations lasted for many days and nights and were graced by as many kinds of dance and music performances as possible. It was reported in the press that many Malay dances were performed as well as Javanese, Siamese and Chinese dances, yet *zapin* was not mentioned.

The origins of *zapin* on Penyengat

It was the late Penyengat scholar Raja Hamzah Yunus who established the advent of *zapin* on Penyengat by interviewing three elders born on Penyengat between 1876 and 1910. *Zapin* was first introduced on Penyengat in c. 1919–1920 by Encik Muhamad Ali, who had migrated to Penyengat from the Malay palace at Sambas in West Kalimantan.

Yunus' first interviewee was Raja Muhamad Nongman (b. 1876), who worked as an artist and general palace official (*warga kedatun*) in the Penyengat palace until he became a scribe (*setiausaha* or *juru tulis*) for the Tengku Besar (Crown Prince). As a young artist he joined the Asyrakal group, which specialised in performing Islamic devotional music and dance such as *maulud berzanji*, *nasyid* and *berdah*¹¹ as well as Malay dances. He played the *biola* (Malay violin), *serunai* (wooden oboe), and/or *nafiri* (long metal trumpet) in an *orkés Melayu* (Malay ensemble) and in an ensemble for a *mak yong* masked theatre group on Mantang Island, which lies off the southern coast of Bintan. In the early twentieth century, the Netherlands East Indies administration sent him to Tarempa (now renamed Siantan) in the Anambas archipelago, and he only returned to Penyengat on his retirement in 1919. It was then that he first saw *zapin* danced there, introduced by an artist born in Sambas. Being a proficient musician, it was easy for him to learn to play the *gambus*, and to lead an ensemble to accompany *zapin* performances in the *zapin lembut* ('soft') style of Sambas.

Raja Hamzah Yunus' second interviewee, Raja Ahmad bin Raja Daud (1890–2001), whom the NEI government employed as a Land

11. This information was supplied by Bp Syafaruddin, Head of Culture in the Tanjungpinang Office of Tourism and Culture (p.c. 5 January 2017). *Maulud berzanji* is a genre of songs of praise of the Prophet in the month of his birth – Maulud. *Nasyid* and *berdah* are group song-dances with religious or secular texts and frame drum accompaniment.

Registry official (*manteri ukur*), actually learned *zapin lembut*, *kompang* and *hadrah* performance from Muhamad Ali Raja Ahmad, who had migrated from Sambas. Raja Ahmad passed on his skills in the 1920s to many young artists, including his own children, especially his son Raja Maisarah (b. 1924). In 1979 Raja Ahmad was awarded the title of 'Cultural Leader of Riau Islands Regency' for his role as a performer, conservator and promoter of traditional Malay arts such as *wayang bangsawan* theatre, the *boria* dance, devotional *hadrah* and *kompang* music and *zapin Kepri* (Yunus 2000: 98).

Raja Hamzah Yunus' third interviewee was Said Husin al-Atas (b. 1910), an all-round performer and painter¹² who was born of mixed Arab–Malay descent into the Penyengat Tuan Said community. Generally, *zapin* performances were highly appreciated in areas where Tuan Said communities pursued their trading activities, as they did in Penyengat, Tanjungpinang and Daik–Lingga.¹³ Said Husin received his basic artistic training as a child in the rich cultural environment of Penyengat, and his higher education in Tanjungpinang. He studied *zapin* dancing from Muhamad Ali's student, Encik Rifin. As heir (*pewaris*) to the traditional *zapin Penyengat* dance style, he supported the development of standard *zapin Penyengat*, *hadrah* and other performance in the towns of Tanjungpinang and Kijang and on nearby Mantang Island (Yunus 2000: 99).

By the 1930s, *zapin* dancing had become an essential social skill, and all males on Pulau Penyengat were required to master it. In the warring 1940s, *zapin* activity was minimal, but it revived in the 1950s and early 1960s. After Suharto established his New Order (1965–1998), *zapin* declined again under military regents; it revived again under a civil regency in the 1980s. In the past few decades, *zapin* has also been danced by mixed couples, and performing groups have been established by such famous female dancer–teachers as Raja Nafisah binti Raja Mahmud, and

12. He was an expert in Malay traditional customs (*pakar adat istiadat*) and also painted backdrops for *bangsawan* and *mak yong* theatre performances.

13. Tuan Said families were also active artists in the Daik–Lingga area. For example, all the adult members of one Tuan Said family, headed by the father of the *zapin* dancer, teacher and entrepreneur – Said Parman, who commutes between Tanjungpinang and Daik to this day – were active dancers, actors and musicians from the 1970s to the 1990s. Their itinerant *bangsawan* theatre troupe performed in their home village near Daik and in parts of Lingga and Singkep Islands during the 1960s and 1970s (p.c. Margaret Kartomi, 14 January 2011 and 20 June 2014).

female dancers such as Raja Maimunah binti Raja Mahmud, Raja Maisarah binti Raja Hasan, and Raja Sariah, all of royal Penyengat descent.

The history of the *zapin* on Penyengat from the 1950s to the present

Raja Ahmad bin Raja Daud continued promoting *zapin* and other Malay arts in the 1950s, early 1960s, and 1980s, receiving, as mentioned above, a coveted Cultural Award from the government in 1979 for his cultural leadership as a promoter of the arts of the Riau Islands, and he remained an iconic artistic figure until he died in 2001. However, the standard form of *zapin* known today was developed under the leadership of his son Raja Mahmud bin Raja Ahmad, who worked in the Department of Information, often had to move his residence to different towns for his work, and taught the dance to local novices wherever he lived. He was a *gambus* player and singer as well as a highly gifted (*sangat piawai*) *zapin* dancer.

Another of Raja Ahmad bin Raja Daud's sons, Raja Maisarah (mentioned above, b. 1924), taught *zapin* to his son Agustina, who passed on his knowledge to many, including his first cousin Azmi, the current leader of a well-known performing group on Penyengat, Sanggar Budaya Warisan Pulau Penyengat (Penyengat Island Cultural Heritage Group). The members of this group regularly rehearse and perform in the sound-shell-like Balai Desa or on the Balai Adat Pulau Penyengat Indra Perkasa stage and in the adjacent yard (*lapangan*) built by the local government at Kampung Baru, opposite the Grand Mosque at Penyengat.

Other important figures in the development of *zapin* Penyengat today are the Pekan Baru-resident researcher and author Raja Hasan Yunus (Raja Hamzah Yunus' brother), the female *zapin* dancer and teacher Raja Nafisah binti Raja Mahmud in Penyengat and Tanjungpinang, the *marwas* musicians Raja Zahar bin Raja Mahmud (alias Ayah Wan), Raja Ali bin Raja Abas, Said Husein; and the female dancer Raja Sabariah binti Raja Hasan.

The *balai adat* at Kampung Bulung remains the centre of creative *zapin* and other choreographic inventions and music-making on Penyengat today, with Azmi continuing to serve as the most active exponent and leader of *zapin* Penyengat performance and other arts. The leading *marwas* musician and teacher in Penyengat today is Raja Mahmud's nephew, Raja Zahar bin Raja Mahmud (alias Ayah Wan).

Another successful *zapin* promoter from the former royal Penyengat dynasty is Raja Alfirafindra, the lead author of this chapter. After attending *zapin* classes held by his grandfather Raja Mahmud bin Raja Ahmad as a child, he began to study *zapin* in his home in Tanjungpinang, and from the age of eight he took daily extra-curricular *zapin* lessons from dance mistress Raja Nafizah binti Raja Mahmud. In Senior High School he joined the government's All-Riau *Zapin* Socialisation Programme (Program Sosialisasi Zapin Se-Riau) while continuing *zapin* classes with his grandfather, who chose him to rehearse his performing groups whenever he could not be present. After graduating from the Institute of Indonesian Arts in Yogyakarta in 1990, Alfirafindra was appointed to the staff of the Dance Department, where he teaches to this day.

The structure of the *zapin* dance and its music

Whether danced by a duo or a pair (or pairs) of duos, *zapin* performances throughout Nusantara divide into three sections. In the Islands these are called: (i) the *awal* ('beginning'), which includes the opening salutation (*sembah*); (ii) the *tengah* ('middle'), which features the memory codes/rhythmic sequences (*ragam langka*) or dance motifs (*bungo*) forming the *zapin* proper; and (iii) the *akhir* ('final section'), comprising skipping, stepping and turning movements in standing and semi-squatting positions and ending with the final *sembah* at a faster tempo. The 'basic' rhythmic sequence comprises 4-beat stepping movements, with one arm swaying back-and-forth and the other held still at back or front at waist level. If there are two pairs of duos, each dancer stands on the cardinal points of a square or rectangle (as in Figure 1.19 on page 33) and then steps forward and backwards.

In the opening/*awal* section the *gambus* musician plays a largely improvised prelude in free metre while the dancers come on stage and pose in semi-squatting position. Lowering their eyes and raising both clasped hands with thumbs outstretched at lower forehead level, they greet the audience with the opening salutation (*sembah/salam pembukaan*). The *sembah* is based on the stylised greeting of subjects to the former sultans and viceroys of Riau-Lingga according to royal Malay custom (*adat istiadat diraja Melayu*).

In the *tengah* section, two pairs of dancers perform the basic rhythmic sequence (*ragam langkah biasa*) before and between each 'specific'

rhythmic sequence (*ragam langkah khusus*), while a vocalist sings a series of verses in *pantun* or *syair* quatrains set to Malay *senandung*-style melodies (*alunan lagu*) with *gambus* ensemble accompaniment, each ending with a loud, 12-beat interlocking *kopak* flourish on the *marwas* drums. In the first (basic) sequence, the dancer pauses on the first dance count, then takes left, right, then left steps forward on the other three beats; and in the second sequence, the dancer takes left, right and left steps on all four beats while making a 180-degree turn to face the opposite direction. During the next verse they perform a sequence based on a specific motif followed by another 12-beat *kopak* burst of loud, *marwas tingkah* ('interlocking') playing. In the next sequence they may move diagonally forward toward and back from the centre point of the square without turning their backs away from the centre, as when moving away from a Malay king in the audience hall, as in the *langkah pecah dua* ('broken two step') formation (see Figure 1.19 on page 33). They then keep introducing a new specific sequence in each subsequent verse followed by *kopak* drumming in this way.

In the final section, the dancers perform the *minta tahto* ('request *tahto*') sequence, which signals to the musicians to begin the *tahto* coda, which may last up to 48 beats. After the *marwas* players accelerate to a very fast tempo and the dancers make their final salutation (*sembah*), the performance comes to a sudden halt. The coda is an Arab-derived feature that is not found in other Malay musical genres (Nor 1993: 24).

In Penyengat and the areas under its influence in the western Riau Islands, the dancers focus on a total of nine rhythmic sequences/memory codes, while in the older, Siak palace-based style in mainland Riau there are many more. An inventory of sequences or rhythmic motifs was drawn up in 1981 at the Seminar for the Comparative Study of Zapin in All Riau (Seminar Studi Perbandingan Zapin se Daerah Riau) attended by *zapin* artists and scholars from all over the then very large province of Riau, and held in the then capital of Riau Province, Pekanbaru.

An inventory of *zapin* rhythmic step motifs in the Riau Islands and the Riau mainland

Zapin dance formations for two duos are based on traditional Malay concepts of space that include a cardinal directional concept of space (Figure 1.16 on page 31) and other geometric concepts or designs,

i.e. a linear, a parallel linear, and/or a circle or square with mid-point design (as shown in Figure 1.14 on page 30). In *zapin Kepri* dances for two duos, for example, the four dancers may step in a linear, parallel linear, and/or a square with mid-point design, while four duos may form two concentric squares. If two duos of *zapin* dancers stand on the four points of a square and step away from each other in parallel they perform what is called a 'facing step' (*langkah hadapan*) and if they step towards each other they perform a 'back step' (*langkah belakang*), while if they stand on the points of a square or circle and move diagonally toward a middle point they perform a 'broken two step' (*langkah pecah dua*) (Figure 1.19 on page 33) (Nor 1993: 146, 148).

The seminar noted that Siak and Penyengat were the two main historical centres of *zapin* creativity in the Province of Riau, which at the time comprised both mainland Riau and the Riau Archipelago. Two distinct *zapin* styles were recognised: the 'Riau Mainland' or 'Siak' style (*zapin gaya Riau Daratan* or *zapin gaya Siak*) and the 'Riau Islands, 'coastal' or 'Penyengat' style (*zapin gaya Kepulauan Riau, zapin gaya Pesisir* or *zapin gaya Penyengat*). People from the Riau Islands who provided source materials included Raja Mahmud Yunus, Raja Mahmud bin Raja Ahmad, Said Parman and Raja Sabariah bin Hasan.

Seminar members thought that the Siak style of *zapin* dancing may have developed in the eighteenth century when the first sultan of Siak, who was of mixed Hadrami Arab/Malay descent, was in power,¹⁴ though no evidence was offered for this. They noted that the Siak style had developed further in the 1930s under the leadership of the dancer and choreographer Adam in Kampung Gemuk and Kampung Lamir, located near the former Siak Sri Inderapura palace on a bank of the Siak river in the east-coastal Riau mainland,¹⁵ and that from the 1930s on the *zapin Siak* style had spread to the area in and around the present capital of mainland Riau province, Pekan Baru, and beyond. The Siak style has since then been called the *zapin Riau Daratan* ('mainland Riau *zapin*') style.

14. In the eighteenth century, the first sultan of Siak, Sayid Ali, took the title of Sultan Assyaidis Sharif Ali Abdul Jalil Sharifuddin (Andaya and Andaya 1982: 93). Some of his descendants are believed to have become sultans.

15. The Siak Sri Inderapura palace was established in 1723 by the former usurper of the Johor-Riau-Lingga throne, Raja Kecik. It was destroyed later and rebuilt in the 1980s by Caltex.

The list of *ragam gerak* rhythmic motifs compiled at the 1981 Riau Seminar included *langkah satu* ('step one'),¹⁶ *pusing tengah satu* ('middle twirl one'), *siku keluang* ('ordinary quincunx movement'),¹⁷ *siku keluang sembah* ('homage movement in quincunx pattern'), *pusing tengah dua* ('middle twirl two'), *sut samping* ('to the side'), *sut maju mundur* ('step forward and back'), *sut gantung* ('hanging step'),¹⁸ *pecah delapan* ('break eight'), *bunga taman* ('flower garden'), *mata angin* ('point of the compass'), *menyambar* ('circle like an eagle'), *pusau/pusing ujung pangkal* ('twirl on the edge of the foot'), *mendayung* ('rowing'), *langkah kanan* ('step to the right'), *langkah kiri* ('step to the left'), *tahto satu* ('tahto one') and *tahto dua* ('tahto two'). Some of these names are fanciful (e.g. *ragam jeruk nipis* – 'citrus fruit movement'), while others are named after their socio-artistic function (e.g. paying homage to a ruler or the audience), or after types of human or animal body movements (e.g. hopping). Some are named after structural moments in the dance (e.g. a *pecah* – 'break or transition from one floor plan to another'). Others serve as a means of indirect communication between dancers and musicians, as with the *minta tahto* movements, which signal to the musicians to play the final coda music.

We have classified the long list of motifs/sequences established at the seminar under the headings of: *sembah* ('paying homage'), *anak ayam patah* ('baby chick with a broken leg'), *langkah belakang* ('stepping backwards'), *loncat* ('hopping'), *pusau/pusing* ('twirling on the spot'), and *tahto* ('final coda phrase'). There are also *pecah* ('break' or 'transition') motifs, which are important if several couples dance together, with each dancer stepping out in opposite directions and circling back to his/her partner, thereby momentarily breaking the current established floor plan (Figure 9.1).

The *sembah* ('homage') category of movements, which may be performed in half-squatting or standing position, includes the *salam pembukaan langkah* ('opening homage step'), *ragam alif sembah satu* ('standing homage [type] one'), and *ragam alif sembah dua* ('standing homage [type] two'). Some *ragam* ('rhythmic pattern of movements')

16. The people of the Islands usually use the term *langkah satu* rather than *langkah alif*, while recognising the appropriateness of the analogy inherent in the term *langkah alif*. *Alif* is the first letter of the Arabic alphabet and is drawn as a vertical line, like a standing *zapin* dancer.

17. A quincunx is a 5-point geometric pattern, with 4 points forming a square and a fifth point in the middle.

18. *Sut* has no known meaning.

are numbered (e.g. *ragam* 1–6 and *ragam* 10), while others are named as follows: *ragam siku keluang baranak* ('child flying fox *ragam*'), *ragam anak ayam patah* ('baby chick with broken leg *ragam*'), *ragam anak ayam patah satu* ('baby chick with broken leg *ragam* one'), and *ragam anak ayam patah dua* ('baby chick with broken leg *ragam* two'). The *loncat* ('hop') category includes the *ragam loncat belanak* ('jumping mullet *ragam*'), *pusing tengah satu* ('middle twirl *ragam* one'), *pusing tengah dua* ('middle twirl *ragam* two'), and *ragam langkah loncat* ('hop step *ragam*'). The *pusing* category includes the *pusing ujung pangkal* ('twirl on the edge *ragam*'), *ragam pusing tak jadi* ('no twirl *ragam*'), *ragam pusing sekarat* ('twirl in the opposite direction *ragam*'), and *ragam pusing sekarat ujung pangkal* ('twirl on the edge of the foot *ragam*'). The *tahto* (final coda) category consists of *tahto satu* ('*tahto* one') and *tahto dua* ('*tahto* two'). The *pecah* ('break') category includes the *ragam pecah duasetengah* ('break two-and-a-half *ragam*'), *ragam pecah dua* ('double break *ragam*'), *ragam pecah delapan sut* ('break eight *ragam*'), *ragam pecah delapan pusing* ('twirling break eight *ragam*'), *ragam pecah ujung* ('break on the edge *ragam*'), *ragam catuk* ('pecking movement *ragam*'), *ragam siku keluang sembah* ('respectful quincunx bow *ragam*'), *ragam siku keluang baranak* ('baby quincunx pattern *ragam*'), and *ragam jeruk nipis* ('citrus fruit *ragam*').

Other rhythmic steps or phrases in *zapin* Riau include: *ragam langkah serong* ('step on the slant *ragam*'), *ragam bertemu* ('meeting step *ragam*'), *ragam lingkaran rotan* ('rattan circle *ragam*'), *ragam sentak jerat* ('jerky snatch *ragam*'), *ragam sut depan* ('next step *ragam*'), *ragam satu* ('stand upright *ragam*'), *ragam bunga satu* ('flower stand upright *ragam*'), *ragam geliat* ('stretching/twisting *ragam*'), *ragam catuk* ('sit with slightly bowed head *ragam*'), and *ragam seribut* ('disturbance *ragam*').

The *zapin* Penyengat alias *zapin* Kepulauan Riau style

The seminar did not trace the history of the *zapin* Penyengat or Riau Islands (Kepulauan Riau) style or clearly distinguish it from the *zapin* Riau Daratan mainland style. Our research shows that the movements of an Island Riau *zapin* dancer's feet and hands are more moderate than those of a Riau mainlander, whose *langkah* alternate between narrow and wide steps in closed knee position. The people of the Islands, on the other hand, take small steps with their hands in closed position when facing the front, lift their feet higher off the ground as they step

forwards, backwards or sideways, and tend to sway their right arm along with the movements of the body as they hold their left arm at waist level.

In Kepulauan Riau/Penyengat-style *zapin*, there are nine basic sequences/memory codes: *langkah satu* ('step one'), *langkah dua* ('step two'), *langkah tiga* ('step three'), *langkah ayak-ayak* ('wobbly walk step'), *langkah titi batang* ('walking on a tree branch bridge'), *langkah pusau belanak* ('mullet fish step'), *langkah pinang kontai* or *pinang kontai* ('kontai betel palm step'), *langkah ayam kaki patah* or *ayam sengek* ('chicken with a broken leg step'), and the *minta gerak tahto penutup* ('request the closing *tahto* movement') which signals to the musicians to play the loud, dynamic *marwas*-led *zapin lagu penutup* ('*zapin* closing music') or *tahto* and may last up to 48 beats or so. As the form developed, the dancers' foot movements became livelier (*lincah*). The 'wobbly walk step' and the 'walking on a tree branch bridge' steps are the most difficult to perform and not lose one's balance. Variations in floor plans and choreography are often based on the accompanying song or instrumental music. Contemporary developments of *zapin* on Penyengat also use other dance motifs or steps and tempo transition.

Recent developments in *zapin Penyengat* and *zapin Kepulauan Riau*

After the Province achieved autonomy in 2004, *zapin* activities on Penyengat have burgeoned under the leadership of Azmi,¹⁹ who organises regular rehearsals and performances in the Balai Desa. He mostly performs with musicians Mazlan, Yudi, Ihksan, Toha, and the female singer Raja Khadijah, but also plays with other groups. They accompany traditional as well as recently choreographed dances, including *zapin laba-laba* ('spider *zapin*'), *zapin tempurung* ('coconut shell *zapin*'), and *zapin pedang* ('sword *zapin*'), which are named after dance movements or props carried by the dancers as they perform.

Since 2004 the autonomous provincial government has adopted a policy of revitalising the traditional arts and supporting *kreasi baru* ('new creations'), partly by increasing the opportunities for local groups to perform at public events, festivals and competitions. Government and the

19. Azmi's mother is the famous singer Raja Khadijah binti Raja Umar (Raja Mahmud's niece) – see also Chapter 8 in this volume. Besides leading *zapin* performances, he is the *gambus* player in the leading *ghazal* music group in Penyengat.

private sector have presented or supported many festivals, competitions and other artistic events that include performances of *zapin*. They include the annual Festival Seni Bintan ('Festival of Bintan Arts') in Tanjungpinang; Festival Rampai Budaya Melayu ('Bouquet of Malay Culture in Daik-Lingga'); Festival Tari Joget Dangkong ('Dangkong Joget Dance Festival') in Karimun; Kenduri Melayu ('Malay Celebration') in Batam; and the Festival Seni Natuna ('Natuna Art Festival') in Ranai, Natuna. *Zapin* was also performed at the: Festival Budaya Melayu ('Festival of Malay Culture') in Tanjung Pinang in 1993; Festival Budaya Melayu Sedunia ('World Festival of Malay Culture') in Pekan Baru in 2003; Festival Revitalisasi Budaya Melayu ('Revitalisation of Malay Culture Festival') in Tanjungpinang in 2004, 2008 and 2012; Festival Tamadun Melayu ('Festival of Malay Civilisation') in Tanjungpinang in 2013; and the Festival Zapin ('Zapin Festival') in Tanjungpinang in 2015.

Zapin is also frequently performed at annual festivals in mainland Riau Province, including at the Festival Zapin Serantau ('Zapin Migrant Festival') in Bengkalis, Festival Sri Gemilang ('Sri Gemilang Festival') in Tembilahan/ Hilir Regency, Festival Andam Budaya ('Andam Cultural Festival') in the city of Dumai, Festival Budaya Melayu ('Festival of Malay Culture') in Pekan Baru, and the Festival Siak Bermadah ('Siak Arts Festival') at the Siak Sri Indrapura palace, at Siak.

Revivals of royal performances and presentations of new works have also been presented in arenas at or near the former Malay palaces on Penyengat Island and at Daik on Lingga Island. They have also been organised at former palaces in mainland Riau, at Siak Sri Indrapura on the Siak river, Pelalawan on the Kampar river, Indragiri on the Indragiri river, Rokan IV Koto on the Rokan River, Sahilan on the Kampar Kiri River, Jambi on the Batang Hari river, Palembang on the Musi River, Kalianda in Lampung, Nusantara and Maluku in eastern Indonesia and elsewhere.

Major exposure of the Riau Islands or Penyengat style of *zapin* began in 2006 when Raja Alfirafindra's group performed for international guests of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in the national palace. In 2014 Raja Alfirafindra was appointed choreographer (*penata tari*) for the Grand Opening and Closing Processions at the national Musabaqah Tilawatil Qurân (MTQ) Recitation Competition held in Batam,²⁰ pre-

20. In the presence of Indonesia's President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and Vice-President Yusuf Kala.

senting a mass dance titled Katam ('Black Henna') based on all nine basic *zapin Penyengat* dance movements and performed by 350 junior and senior high school and private dance school pupils in Tanjungpinang. Since the province achieved autonomy, a standardised form of *zapin Kepulauan Riau*, based on the *zapin Penyengat* style as it has evolved over the past century, has been taught in all junior and senior high schools in the Province.

Conclusion

The tripartite structure of *zapin Penyengat*, together with its low-pitched *gambus* sounds contrasting with loud *marwas* drumming, lend it a Middle Eastern character, while its vocal and ensemble style and secular lyrics give it a Malay feel. Some *Penyengat*-style dance motifs resemble those of *zapin Arab*, but they are performed in a more relaxed Malay style. Moreover, mixed-gender and all female dance performances are perfectly acceptable. *Zapin Penyengat* is a fine example of the *kacukan* tendency – the historical propensity of the Malay people to combine facets of their culture with those of another people with whom they have been in long-term contact, in a process of creative transformation or transculturation.

The different Arab and Malay styles of *zapin* and *gambus* ensemble performance evolved separately over the centuries in communities of Arab and Malay descent respectively. By 1883 or earlier, a form of *zapin Arab* had developed in communities of Arab descent in Batavia, and by 1887 or earlier a style of *zapin Melayu* had evolved outside of Arab communities in the Serdang palace on the east coast of Sumatra. Regional styles of *zapin Melayu* had also developed outside Arab communities, e.g. in and around Siak, Asahan, Deli and Palembang on east-coastal Sumatra; at Sambas, Mempawah, Pontianak etc. in west Kalimantan; in north Maluku; and elsewhere.

However, *zapin* was not introduced on Penyengat until a few years after the sultanate of Riau–Lingga met its demise and colonial power was fully established. Although *gambus* music was popular on Penyengat in the nineteenth century, the Wahhabi-influenced literary and religious leaders did not tolerate serenading on the lute, which they thought led to 'loose living'. Yet *gambus* skills were passed on to the next generation anyway, and when an immigrant from Sambas (with which the members

of the royal family of Penyengat were historically associated) introduced *zapin* dancing on Penyengat in 1919–1920, local musicians quickly learnt how to accompany the dancing on the *gambus*, *biola* and drums.

At first, *zapin Penyengat* was performed only by males, who took relatively long steps, in the *zapin lembut* (soft) style of Penyengat, and focused on nine basic steps or motifs that were partly different from those in Siak. In the golden years of *zapin Penyengat*, the 1930s, the style was more vigorous and the steps became shorter, with dancers holding their hands in closed position when facing the front. They also lifted their feet higher off the ground as they stepped forwards, backwards or sideways, and swayed their right arm along with the movements of the body while holding their left arm at waist level. All men and boys were expected to learn *zapin* and join performances at family celebrations and other social events. Female dancer-teachers of royal descent and artists from *tuan said* communities appear in the list of leading *zapin Penyengat* proponents compiled in the 1930s.

When the colonial Netherlands East Indies regime met its demise in the warring, poverty-stricken 1940s, there was a decline in the fortunes of *zapin*, but from the 1950s the tradition began to be revived. Under the New Order military regents it declined again, but was revitalised by male, female and mixed performing groups under civilian regents, from the mid-1980s. Meanwhile the dance's rhythmic movements (*ragam zapin*) began to be standardised. The dance was taught widely in junior and senior high schools and performing art studios, using materials provided mainly by female and male royal descendants of the former palaces in Siak and Penyengat.

After the province achieved autonomy in 2004, *zapin* activity increased, and from 2012 the dance was taught in most junior and senior high schools and art studios. New dances based on traditional *zapin* were developed, and mass *zapin* dances were choreographed for school and studio groups to perform on great occasions. Increasing numbers of performing groups performed in annual festivals and competitions; and when cultural delegations were asked to perform at public or private events or festivals, a *zapin* performance was considered mandatory. The great majority of high school children now learn to perform the dance, thus assuring it of a significant future as one of the most potent cultural identity symbols of the Riau Archipelago.